



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USDA names new State Conservationist for Massachusetts

AMHERST, Mass. (December 15, 2006) -- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has selected Christine Clarke to serve as State Conservationist for Massachusetts. As State Conservationist, Clarke will oversee the federal agency's programs, operations and staff in the Bay State. She succeeds Cecil B. Currin, who recently retired.

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to Massachusetts farmers and other landowners to help them improve and protect the commonwealth's soil, water and other natural resources. The agency has a state headquarters in Amherst and seven field offices across the Bay State. For more information, visit www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov.

Previously, Clarke served as Geodata Coordinator for NRCS in Beltsville, Maryland, supporting agency policy analysis and development needs, as well as business needs, related to spatial data.

A Rhode Island native, Clarke began her career with the agency – then known as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) – in 1981 in the Newport field office as a soil conservation technician. She later served as a Soil Scientist with the U.S. Peace Corps and U.S. Agency for International Development in Jamaica. Upon returning from overseas, Clarke served as a Soil Scientist in Tolland and Hartford, Connecticut.

"I'm pleased to return to New England and look forward to working with our staff and partners to serve the commonwealth's conservation needs," said Clarke. "I'm impressed by the wealth of experience in the NRCS Massachusetts staff and their strong commitment to the NRCS mission of 'helping people help the land'."

Clarke has served as Acting Director of the National Geospatial Development Center in Morgantown, West Virginia; Standards Lead for Geospatial One-Stop; NRCS representative to the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC); National Soil Digitizing Coordinator; and GIS Specialist, Morgantown, West Virginia.

Clarke, who enjoys kayaking, gardening and anything outdoors, holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Rhode Island in Resource Development and Soil Science, and a graduate certificate from the University of Connecticut in GIS. She is a certified Soil Scientist.

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